



Fanpower

Without the fans there would be no stars, no wrestling, there would be no Heritage.

Ron Historyo



The stories I am about to recall to the best of my knowledge must have happened in the late 1950's.

Time plays tricks on the memory, but a few things stick and I have good reason why.

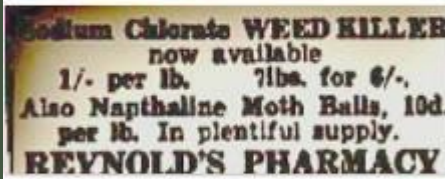
I only knew one granddad, Old Ern, and he died early in 1960 when I was six years old.

You will probably know and like The Bradshaw's of Barnoldswick, I certainly do and Old Ern could have been the man Alf Bradshaw was based on. He had that very same gravelly voice and what's more very much the same attitudes. Don't feel sorry for gran, she was not as down trodden as Audrey if down trodden is the word, because when it came to the crunch gran was a woman of true grit. Then again maybe Audrey had Alf's number.

And myself, well I could easily have been Billy Bradshaw. Not Oh Mam, but Oh Gran.

I stayed on a Saturday, council house on a T Shaped estate, there had never been much money. I can remember Saturday morning stood outside the local corner shop on the

New Shopping Estate and Old Ern digging into his little purse for some money. Almost every week I got one of those tiny matchbox cars made by Lesney products, made from



1953 for the first five years with metal wheels that scratched all the furniture surfaces. I still have about 50 of them, pity I did not keep the boxes. That was a good start to a Saturday. Back to gran's for a plate of chips, done in lard and dripping of course.

Now there was one thing about Saturday's, it was high risk day. There were many rules at home but not any at gran's. If you had seen me you would have thought I was practicing to come off the top of the corner post like Dynamite Kid. But actually no....I will explain.

One of my passions as a child were Westerns. You know Cheyenne that ran from 1955, Rawhide from 1959, Bronco Lane from 1958 and another favorite The Range Rider from as early as 1951.

This particular Saturday afternoon I was going to be Jock Mahoney, the range Rider. Why, Well he was always jumping off balconies straight onto his horse or the bad guys or even those Apaches.

Well I did say no rules. Every cushion came off every chair and I propped them up, then I climbed onto the chair arm and then on to the top of that grand piece of furniture, the gramophone. That old relic must have been four or five feet high with a lid that closed, used to play those old slate LP sized records, I can remember The Inkspots (Who the hell were they)

Anyway I could have been Dynamite, but I was range Rider and I flew. At three feet and a bit my head must

have been seven or eight foot above ground level. Well those Apaches were scattered. I beat the daylight out of them.

"I hope you haven't knocked the tuner our Ron" said gran "we have it tuned in for The Archers"

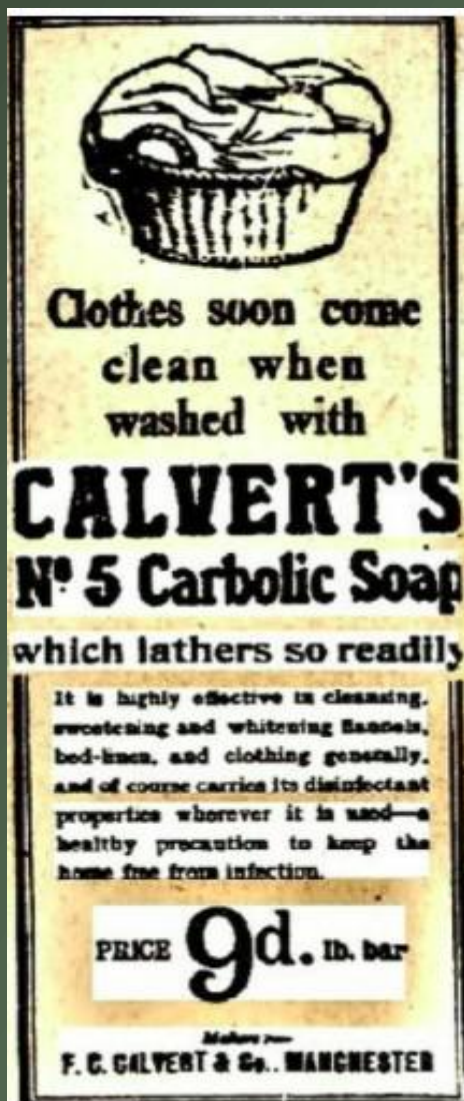
"No Gran" I said in my Billy Bradshaw voice.

Blimey that radio was boring. Do you remember 20 Questions? You Know, Animal Vegetable or Mineral.... and the next object is !!!!! and then Pause then repeat !!!!!

Well old Ern had a dry humor, sat there with a straight face he used to join in with, "The next object is.....a F**t.....pause.....a F**t"

"Don't use language in front of Our Ron Ernie" chastised gran.

No response.



Anyway, it was getting near four o'clock, gran was baking bread in the scullery, always made her own bread, her gran had her own bakery so that is where the habit came from. Can't beat it straight from the oven with real butter.

"Nip upstairs our Ron, and go in the wardrobe and get the liniment, he's moaning again about his rheumatic and get me a bar of soap out of the bathroom, and pack them cushions up he'll be back in a minute after feeding the hens. You'll have to stop now he'll be watching the wrestling."

"O.K. Gran"

Well I opened that wardrobe door and what a smell, Mothballs, blimey nothing could survive that smell, naphthalene, and all mingled with the smell of leather belts and shoes polished in Kiwi boot polish. What did they put in that stuff, they don't make it like that today.

And then the bathroom, the soap, Carbolic, not that scent stuff that mum uses at home. It was oozing through the paper wrapper, not much plastic about in those days. I did my good deed.

In comes old Ern and over to the sideboard he goes and opens a door. Another smell, this time strong tobacco and his pipe comes out and a tin of Quality Street. Walks over to the chair in front of the T.V., throws a couple of logs on the fire, huge puff of smoke hits the room.

Drops his braces off his shoulders and gets in the chair eyes glued to the TV cabinet. Gran puts a cup of tea on the chair arm.

"Leave him alone now our Ron, he won't share his Quality Street and he's watching the wrestling. There is a Red Indian on today"

How could that be? There were no Red Indians in this country, they were in America, and anyway they were in the past were they not. Can't be possible, they would be going round killing us with a tomahawk and taking our scalps. I was hypnotized.

The indian was not on yet, so I was a bit mesmerized by that tin of Quality Street, Old Ern was not looking at me, he was chewing and watching. I walked into the Scullery past the odd Bluebottle buzzing about, and up to gran. "He won't give me one gran" I said in my Billy Bradshaw voice.

"No I told you so. Have a look in the Pantry if you fancy a biscuit." Well I opened the door and looked in, what the hell was that hung up. "Oh It's a side of bacon"



I passed on the biscuit and went back to the TV and Quality Street. Gran came in. "Look why don't you just give him one"

Old Ern was just peeling a caramel and had the paper wrapper in one hand with residual sticky caramel on it. ZAP ! He stuck it on gran's nose. Nobody but nobody bothered Ern when the wrestling was on.

Do that again and I think the rolling pin would be out, but gran trundled off back to the oven.

Then there was a distraction, there was an Indian on the T.V. Looked like a chief to me, full war bonnet. Could it be, were we safe. Was he really here in England. Well I goggled and like Old Ern my eyes never left the screen. Never had I seen anything like it, a war dance going on here in this country.

Of course it finished with a chop and cheers. "Whats his name grandad"

"Billy two Rivers son, Billy two Rivers"

Well after that I was always waiting out for Billy two Rivers to be on T.V.

The funny thing is that a young child remembers persona . Why is that man wearing a skirt. That 's not a skirt, its a Kilt, he's a Scotsman. Never forgot the massive Ian Campbell. Then you get the Thick set guy, bald with the bull neck full of creases, might have been Czeslaw, the black man with the headbutt and the odd guy in a leotard.

Well Saturday was not quite over for Ern, there was Dixon of Dock Green yet with Jack Warner based on the film The Blue Lamp.and for me another plate of chips.

You know I was fascinated with Native Americans. I have read all of Louis L'Amours works, have the lot and a full set of 1930's Oliver Strange's "Sudden" along with many others.

I haven't made the story up, and I cannot exaggerate my enthusiasm for the Mohawks in Hawkeye and the Last of the Mohicans, The Apache, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho and all the rest.

The last time I saw Bill, Two Rivers that is, not Bradshaw, was in 1974 at the Lancastrian Hall in Swinton on a Jack Cassidy show. Well past his best, but memorable.

Well a little research tells me that Billy two Rivers fought Ray Hunter in November 1959 on T.V.

Maybe that was the day. Old Ern died in March 1960, so it was before then. Wrestling also gained a new fan.....gran. She watched it and never missed until they took it off T.V. Living until she was 95. I don't think she had any favorites, only anyone who was

giving McManus or Pallo the rounds of the kitchen. The bad guys really got her swearing and she had been a Sunday School teacher in her youth.

I'll finish there but above I show you some of my tattoos and a little Nostalgia.

